

## MINUTES

### **EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE KINGS RIVER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

**JANUARY 26, 2023**

---

#### **Call To Order**

Executive Policy Committee (ExCom) Member and Kings River Water Association (KRWA) Watermaster, Steven Haugen, called the meeting to order on January 26, 2023, at 9:02 a.m., via teleconference.

#### **Roll Call**

Members Present: Steven Haugen (KRWA), David Merritt (Kings River Conservation District - KRCD), and Gerald Hatler (California Department of Fish and Wildlife - CDFW)

Others Present: Brian Beal, Binu Brar, John Cameron, Soua Lee, Matthew Meadows, Bailey Routt, and Lori Werner

#### **Committee Member**

##### **Comment Period**

No committee member comments were provided.

#### **Public Comment**

##### **Period**

No members from the public were present; therefore, no public comments were provided.

#### **Minutes Approval**

Minutes taken from the September 28, 2022 Executive Policy Committee Meeting of the KRFMP were considered. Upon the motion of David Merritt, seconded by Gerald Hatler, and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the minutes were approved as corrected.

#### **Executive Officer**

##### **Report**

Haugen reported on the current water conditions. The snow water content on the pillows varies between 35-45 inches with a 42-inch average across the watershed, which is close to 140 percent of the April 1 average. We are halfway through the snow accumulation period, meaning there is still time in the season to accumulate precipitation as snow or rainfall.

The current April-July runoff forecasts are in the 180-190 percent range. The current forecast is 170 percent of average, which is significant enough to trigger a high-level exhibit D flow.

As we come down off the irrigation season this fall, minimum flows in the Kings River could be 250 C.F.S. versus the normal 100 C.F.S. If this occurs, we will need to carry a minimum of 250 C.F.S. through April 1, 2024.

Pine Flat storage is 510,000 A.F. and continues to gain about 2,025 A.F. per day. As of this morning, our orders are 1,150 C.F.S., part of which is made up by Mill Creek and Hughes Creek. The storms we had earlier this year put an abundance of moisture into the Mill Creek watershed; however, it is sustaining its flows downstream quite well. For the month of January, we have had 33,000 A.F. of runoff from Mill Creek itself, which is not counting Hughes Creek.

The water ultimately made it down the system to Crescent Weir on the North Fork and down to Empire #1 on the South Fork. It kept the system up and running for 10 to 12 days. On January 22, we started irrigation orders out of Pine Flat and have been ramping up over the course of the week.

KRWA has received several questions from member units, news reporters, and the public regarding flood release over the last few days. KRWA is confident there will be a flood release this season. It could be early based on both the heavy snowpack and what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decides when we shift into the calculated conditional space in Pine Flat on February 1, 2023.

KRCD sensors show Pine Flat temperatures ranging from 7.3 to 8.3 Celsius, which is much colder than we have seen in several years. This is positive news for the fisheries program.

**Public Advisory  
Group Report**

Public Advisory Group member, John Cameron, did not have a report.

**Financial Report**

KRCD Controller, Binu Brar, presented the financial report dated June 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

CDFW Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor, Brian Beal, noted the department did not provide two reservoir expenditures to KRCD for the previous quarter. He believes together, they come to roughly \$8,000. Hatler will send the invoices to Brar before the next ExCom meeting in June.

Upon the motion of Steven Haugen, seconded by David Merritt, and unanimously carried by roll call vote, the financial report was approved with the addition of CDFW expenditures.

**Technical Steering  
Committee Reports**

CDFW Stocking Update: Beal provided a brief update on the Department's stocking. Starting on July 1, CDFW's annual allotment is 18,000 pounds of Rainbow Trout plus subs; however, only 7,400 pounds have been released in the last seven months. The Department's allocation

is still being affected by the April 2022 outbreak of *Lactococcus petaurid* in the eastern Sierra region and the fact that the San Joaquin and Moccasin Creek Hatcheries had to provide a significant number of production fish to another region. Beal believes they will still be able to provide their full allocation. He also mentioned a large amount of Brown Trout was made available to CDFW, so they chose to release them into the Kings River.

Supplemental Stocking Program: KRCD Program and Regulatory Analyst, Soua Lee, reported the KRFMP supplemental stocking program began in November 2022. To date, the Program has stocked approximately 7,400 pounds of fish. The fish per pound average is 2.28. KRCD has also stocked 2,100 pounds of fish, averaging 2.21 fish per pound. Starting next month, Desert Springs Trout Farm will stock fish three times in February and two times in March. Most of the fish that will be allocated over the next few months will be from the fisheries program and KRCD.

Kings River Clean-Up Days: Lee provided a few pictures from the 2022 Kings River Clean-Up days. The program continues to be successful. In January 2023, the clean-up took place at Frustration Lake with a total of eight volunteers. Together, they collected 11 large bags of trash. The clean-up days will continue to take place on the third Saturday of every month.

Enhancement Project Planning Update: Lee announced Cramer Fish Sciences completed their 30 percent design project for the fisheries program. Additionally, the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) prepared and submitted a grant application last October to CDFW's Office of Spill Prevention Program. The grant had over \$750,000 funds available for applications. The Department received 25 applications requesting over \$5 million, but with limited funds available, CDFW was only able to fund five projects. Even though the TSC did not get the grant, they will continue to search for funding for their two projects elsewhere.

2022-2023 Planned Incubator Operations: Lee reported 120,000 eggs were placed in the incubator earlier this month. Due to recent storms, a large amount of mud and silt made its way into the raceways. Fortunately, there was very little die-off and KRCD staff members were able to clear the raceways.

KRCD Resource Analyst, Lori Werner, noted there has been a lot of interest from volunteers. She also mentioned the colder temperatures should not negatively affect fish releases in the coming months.

### Other

Beal mentioned KRWA has requested information on the recent Nutria issue. CDFW has hired a new program manager and they will be able to provide an update at the next TSC meeting in May.

**Adjournment**            The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

**Next Meeting**            The next meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., at the  
KRCO/KRWA office.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bailey Rount  
Kings River Water Association  
*Executive Administrative Assistant*